

## CIRM Board Members Approve Policy for Remote Participation in Meetings

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San Francisco, Calif., December 1, 2008 - In a special meeting of the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee, members voted to allow participation in future meetings by teleconference, a decision that is expected to resolve periodic difficulties achieving quorum at regular meetings. This decision will allow members with pressing obligations or health issues to participate in meetings and cast votes remotely.

The 29 member governing board for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), the state stem cell agency, meets at locations throughout California several times per year to vote on grant funding and other organizational issues. Members also participate in subcommittee meetings relating to ongoing CIRM operations.

According to the new policy, no more than five board members may participate in a board meeting by teleconference for a given meeting, excluding those who are patient advocate members of the board and have ongoing medical needs. Members won't be able to participate by teleconference more than twice per year, and members participating by teleconference must do so from a location that is accessible to the public. Those members who participate via teleconference will not be able to participate in closed session discussion of proprietary and confidential information as a part of a grant or loan application. The board also established priority for how requests to participate by teleconference will be accommodated.

Robert Klein, chairman of the ICOC, said with the new policy CIRM benefits from the board members' expertise even when those members are unable to attend in person. "Our dedicated board members have critical responsibilities at universities, companies, and non-profit organizations. Despite their other obligations, members have participated in 114 days of public meetings in the past four years. This new policy will allow board members to carry out their work with CIRM even when 1) personal medical issues; critical medical research; or 3) other professional issues prevent them from being present," Klein said.

The board also discussed recommendations to the U.S. Presidential transition team. These recommendations will be discussed at a legislative subcommittee meeting later this month. If approved, they will include:

- Work with congress to remove the Dickey-Wicker amendment that prevents federal funds from being used to create new embryonic stem cell lines from embryos left over after in vitro fertilization .
- Work with congress to pass a bill authorizing funding for embryonic stem cell research and prohibiting reproductive cloning.
- Extend federal loan guarantees to the biotech sector for loans by CIRM on board-approved medical research.
- Expand staffing at the FDA.
- Support higher levels of NIH-funded research

According to Klein, these changes would accelerate the pace of embryonic stem cell research and bring new therapies to people living with debilitating disease.

**About CIRM** CIRM was established in early 2005 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 229 research and facility grants totaling more than \$614 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit [www.cirm.ca.gov](http://www.cirm.ca.gov).

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